

EDITORIAL

Professor Mansour Ibrahim Al-Hazmi has dedicated his latest book, *Beyond the Ruins* (1427/2006), "to our beloved King Saud University on its fiftieth birthday, as we, its pioneers, have aged way beyond that. We joined it in its childhood, taught its first sons while we were young teaching assistants, and once more, we returned to it having earned our higher degrees. It warmly embraced us, and to it we gave all the love and loyalty we have. These old papers I dedicate to King Saud University and to my female and male students who have become well-recognized scholars." Al-Hazmi then marshals their names (females and males), names that are now the pride of our cultural society inside and outside our country.

I have long contemplated this dedication: Why has Al-Hazmi titled his new book *Beyond the Ruins*? Is it a re-visitation of old ruined dwellings in the tradition of the famous old Arab poet Imrou' al-Qais who, according to Arab historians, was the first to revisit in order to cry and to ask others to cry on the remains of old ruined dwellings? About what is Al-Hazmi asking the university? Do remains of old dwellings speak? Perhaps he is interrogating the university, and perhaps it will respond to him and re-run the tapes of fifty years of memories spent in this university, yes, in this university which has abandoned those who participated in its creation, and failed to include them in its programs as a gesture of gratitude and respect; after all, they are the ones who have built this edifice of which our society is too proud! Al-Hazmi was among the pioneers who embarked on the path of knowledge and joined the university when it was only two years old, and witnessed all stages of its growth, actively nursing it with the milk of knowledge as it advanced to its tenth year. During its adolescent years those pioneers were _ in their courtesy, wisdom and insight_ the ones who steered it against teenage whims, and patiently directed it to its dignified status so that the newer generation will take it as an example to follow, and leave behind a profitable knowledge.

The certain contribution of Al-Hazmi was the launching of the first academic journal of the college of Arts , which was also the first of its kind in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia . He was behind its creation, was its editor-in-chief, and issued its first volume with contributions by the first academic Saudi group. He further tended it carefully until it established itself and spread widely in academic milieus in Arab and foreign libraries and among cultured learners interested in decent scholarly work. With this success, other colleges followed suit, and issued their own journals after the example of the journal of the College of Arts . It perhaps opened new venues in academic work; namely, the joint involvement in scholarly research which, if efforts are well-tuned, culminates in fruition. A case in point at that time was Al-Hazmi's trip to Wadi Alab in Khaif al-Kssa, home to his ancestors of al-Hazmi clan of the tribe of Harb. While there, a number of ancient Arabic inscriptions drew his attention; he photocopied them, and brought those back to me to study them. I welcomed the invitation, but asked him to write about the place and its inhabitants. He did. With that, between the two of us, the first joint academic work materialized in the College of Arts . Again, the Journal had a section that we hoped will never be cancelled: the reviews of M.A. and Ph.D theses and dissertations submitted by Saudis to foreign schools. That section was surely a wonderful service rendered by the journal. However, it has now become only one more remnant among the ruins Al-Hazmi has left and is certainly an example the late comers have so far failed to match. Al-Hazmi and each and every one of us have contributed an example from which those who arrived later have taken, and are still taking, advantage. To be sure, only fresh and healthy water draws the crowd.

The Presidency of Youth Welfare asked me to referee a manuscript on the town of Badr by Mr. Mohammad Saleh Al-Belaihishi. Having thumbed through its leaves, I felt an immense desire to see those quarters which witnessed the first battle between faith and polytheism and where righteousness won over evil. I contacted the author and suggested to him that we together visit Badr. Having been in Jeddah, he welcomed the idea, and I traveled to meet him. On one spring morning of the Hijra year 1413 (Arabic Calendar) we left Jeddah heading towards Badr. Right before noon, we arrived there and paid our respects to its Emir Mubarak bin Hamoud Al Nami. He insisted we spend time and hosted us generously. He also invited a group of the natives of Badr with whom we conversed about the town's conditions, archaeologies, and field of the famous battle. After lunch we visited all the archaeological sites, and viewed some monuments. All this time Al-Belaihishi was photographing and transcribing. We also visited a magnificent mosque built by one of the dignitaries of Jeddah. What we have seen while wandering through the old town of Badr had pained us: many houses had been razed; there was only one single narrow street with locked shops on both sides. The locks of those shops were still there. I implored the Emir of Badr to exert all efforts to protect the site.

Later we took the old road to Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah; and along the way we were able to see water-springs, houses, and villages some of which were furrowed by the road while others were still intact. I wondered to myself: "how we have wronged our archaeologies!" It became obvious to me that those who occupied such houses were not nomads, for nomads are constantly on the move. Those places and their inhabitants have all the right to be termed urban country: houses are still standing, palm trees have dried up, and water-springs have been neglected. All those characteristics attested to permanent residency rather than nomadic movements. Of those water-springs Al-Belaihishi explained their network, function and the rationing of water among farmers. His explanation reminded me of a similar system in the Sultanat of Oman, and of Farzan water-spring in Kharj, and of those in Dumat al-Jandal (Adumatu) and 'Ula, in addition to what the Ottomans had done in Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah. Again, I remembered the studies on those springs, especially what my colleague Professor Abdullah Adam Nasif had done in his dissertation on the water-springs in 'Ula: their system, distribution of water, age estimation, and his assertion that the town had some forty water-springs which were visible to every passer-by. Here again I wondered why would not a project be carried out under the title of "extinct towns on the Hajj road between Makka and Madinah"? A work like this, if completed, will no doubt provides us with rich information about not only water-springs and irrigation, but also inhabitants, villages, and samples of architecture, information for which we are in dire need. How could the students of Architecture and Urban Planning pay no heed to such inviting but neglected prospects? Of late, I was pleased to receive and read Al-Belaihishi's study on Wadi al-Fara', a book he has published on his own expense; he addressed part of what we talked about while we were on our way to Al-Madinah Al-Munawarah, taking the initiative to shed light on the water-springs of Wadi al-Fara' and their irrigation system. His work perhaps will encourage others to carry out a wider and deeper study of those extinct towns.

People have recently witnessed many opinions in national newspapers on the Mosque of the Oath of Allegiance. Writers have advanced many studies and research on the issue. Contrary to received traditional historical agreement, some of these writers claim that the Mosque is not the place where the tribes of al-Aus and al-Khazraj committed themselves to supporting Prophet Mohammad (PBUH) and to defending Islam. Historians, however, have been in full agreement on the authenticity of the place because the building includes construction texts dating back to the Hijra year 144 of the reign of the Abbasid Caliph Abi Jaafer al-Mansur. Among writers who addressed the issue has been Saad bin Abdul Aziz Al-Rashid, professor of Islamic Archaeology and earlier Deputy Minister of Education for Archaeology and Museums. Of all that has been written I am particularly interested in the claim that al-Abbas who enhanced the contract for the

Prophet is no other than al-Abbas ibn Abdul Mutalab. Yet I do remember that the al-Abbas in question is al-Abbas ibn ‘Ubadah ibn Nadhlah al-Ansari al-Khazraji. Having checked the biographies of the Companions of the Prophet, I found the following entry on Abbas ibn ‘Ubadah al-Ansari:

He witnessed the Allegiance of Aqabah, and it is said he witnessed the two cases of Allegiance; and it is confirmed that he was one the first individuals of the Ansars who met the Prophet (PBUH) and converted to Islam prior to the conversion of all the Ansars. On the evidence of Younis ibn Bakir with his reference to the authority of Ibn Iss-hag concerning the second Aqabah Allegiance, Abdullah ibn Ahmed ibn Ali al-Baghdadi informed us that Ibn Iss-hag said: A'assim ibn Omar ibn Ghatadah and Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr ibn Hazm told me that al-Abbas ibn A'badah ibn Nadhlah, who was in coalition with sons of Salem, said:

Oh, ye al-Khazraj do ye know on what terms you are swearing Allegiance to the Prophet (PBUH)? You are committing yourselves to fighting the red and the black; if you anticipate that, when catastrophe befalls your property and death befalls your dignitaries, you will fail him, then know it now that by God if such will be your action, it will be nothing but your shame in this world in the afterworld. But if you anticipate you will uphold him, and remain committed to the terms of the oath you have given him, despite property loss and leaders' death, then you will receive the good of this world and that of the afterworld.

A'assim commented: by God, al-Abbas said what he said to make sure that he sealed for the Prophet (PBUH) the contract. Abdullah ibn Abi Bakr said: al-Abbas said what he said to delay the issue for the night so that Abdullah ibn Obbai will be able to see the matter and thus their stance will be stronger. The group then said: what is our gain_messenger of God_if we remain faithful to our oath? He said: " Paradise ". Then they said: extend your hand so we shake it in commitment. He did and they swore allegiance. Abbas ibn ‘Ubadah said to the Prophet (PBUH): if you so wish we will attack them with our swords tomorrow. The Prophet (PBUH) said: "We have not been ordered yet." Again, Abbas went to the Prophet (PBUH) while still in Makkah, remained with him until the migration to Madinah, thus Abbas was both Muhajr (immigrant) and an Ansari (supporter). The Prophet (PBUH) set Abbas in brotherhood with Othman ibn Madho'on; he did not witness the battle of Badr and was killed a martyr in the battle of Ohid.

Thus, this entry, which Ibn al-Atheer mentioned in Ussd Al-Ghabah (Lions of the Wood), indicates that al-Abbas ibn ‘Ubadah was the one who concluded the contract with al-Aus and al-Khazraj, including Abdullah ibn Obbai, for the Prophet, peace be upon him. According to the biography of al-Abbas bin Abdul Mutalab in Ussd Al-Ghabah there is reference to his attendance at the assembly of the Allegiance to conclude the contract; at that time al-Abbas did not yet embrace Islam, and Ibn al-Atheer did not cite the text of the dialogue nor did he name those from whom he derived his information. Ibn al-Atheer, nevertheless, related a text close to the previous dialogue without assigning it to any particular narrator. This makes us accept his presence, but we simply believe that Ibn al-Atheer only repeated the dialogue which took place between Abbas ibn ‘Ubadah and al-Aus and al-Khazraj. This is a chance for historians to address the authenticity of assigning the matter to al-Abbas ibn Abdul Mutalab.

Editor-in-Chief